

Washington, DC – The House today passed the Service Members Home Ownership Tax Act of 2009, H.R. 3590, which includes a Blumenauer provision that allows members of the armed services, Foreign Service, and intelligence community to take full advantage of the 2009 First Time Homebuyer Tax Credit. The bill passed 416-0. Currently, this credit cannot be claimed by those on temporary government assignment overseas, since the law requires the buyer to live in the home for 36 consecutive months.

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Blumenauer introduced a bill in September, the “Call to Service Homebuyer Credit Act of 2009,” H.R.3573, which would count duty away from home as time spent fulfilling the 36 month occupancy requirement. It also gives a second chance to those who served away from home in 2009 by extending the credit for one year.

Following is a statement from Rep. Blumenauer:

“Today we fixed a glitch that penalized America’s men and women for government service away from home. Like other Americans, personnel overseas deserve to benefit from the First Time Homebuyer Tax Credit, and I’m pleased that they will have another year to take advantage of this successful program.

“I first learned about this issue when a constituent, whose wife works for USAID, told me that they would have to repay their homebuyer credit because she was serving abroad. Despite paying property and state taxes in Oregon, they were being punished for serving our nation.

“Today I voted on their behalf, and on behalf of government workers around the nation who serve our nation.” Following is a statement from Malcolm Bixby, the constituent who first wrote to Rep. Blumenauer about the problem with the First Time Homebuyer Tax Credit:

“My wife and I were excited to take advantage of the homebuyer program and purchase our first house in Portland. We certainly didn’t expect to be penalized for committing to service abroad, and I appreciate Congressman Blumenauer’s efforts to fix the problem and extend this program to people doing government service abroad.”

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